

leading scientists and religious leaders, to philosophers and families, to patient advocates and to the general public. From many opinions and beliefs, as Dr. Shapiro said, one unanimous conclusion has emerged: Attempting to clone a human being is unacceptably dangerous to the child and morally unacceptable to our society.

I believe strongly that this conclusion reflects a national consensus, and I believe personally that it is the right thing to do. Today I am sending legislation to the Congress that prohibits anyone in either public or private sectors from using these techniques to create a child. Until the day I sign the legislation into law, the ban on Federal funding I declared in March will remain in effect. And once again, I call upon the private sector to refrain voluntarily from using this technology to attempt to clone a human being.

I want to make clear that there is nothing inherently immoral or wrong with these new techniques—used for proper purposes. In fact, they hold the promise of revolutionary new medical treatments and life-saving cures to diseases like cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and cancer, to better crops and stronger livestock. This legislation, therefore, will not prohibit the use of these techniques to clone DNA in cells, and it will not ban the cloning of animals. What the legislation will do is to reaffirm our most cherished belief about the miracle of human life and the God-given individuality each person possesses. It will ensure that we do not fall prey to the temptation to replicate ourselves at the expense of those beliefs and the lives of innocent children we would produce.

Finally, the legislation will ensure that we continue the national dialog we began 3 months ago and will provide the Nation and the Congress another opportunity to take a look at this

issue in 5 years. To make sure that all our voices are heard as we explore human cloning, the legislation specifically requires the National Bioethics Advisory Commission to continue its study and report back in 4½ years. At that time, we will decide how to proceed based on what has been accomplished and agreed upon and debated and discovered in the intervening period.

Banning human cloning reflects our humanity. It is the right thing to do. Creating a child through this new method calls into question our most fundamental beliefs. It has the potential to threaten the sacred family bonds at the very core of our ideals and our society. At its worst, it could lead to misguided and malevolent attempts to select certain traits, even to create certain kinds of children, to make our children objects rather than cherished individuals.

We are still a long way from understanding all the implications of the present discoveries, but it is our moral obligation to confront these issues as they arise and to act now to prevent abuse. Today I hope other countries will see what we are doing and do the same, and I pledge to work with them to enforce similar bans around the world that reflect these values.

Once again, let me say a heartfelt thank-you on behalf of our entire Nation to the National Bioethics Advisory Commission for the remarkable work you have done and the work you have agreed to continue doing in the coming years.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Harold T. Shapiro, Chairman, National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Human Cloning Prohibition Legislation

June 9, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for immediate consideration and prompt enactment the "Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997." This legislative proposal would prohibit any attempt to cre-

ate a human being using somatic cell nuclear transfer technology, the method that was used to create Dolly the sheep. This proposal will also provide for further review of the ethical

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and scientific issues associated with the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer in human beings.

Following the February report that a sheep had been successfully cloned using a new technique, I requested my National Bioethics Advisory Commission to examine the ethical and legal implications of applying the same cloning technology to human beings. The Commission concluded that at this time "it is morally unacceptable for anyone in the public or private sector, whether in a research or clinical setting, to attempt to create a child using somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning" and recommended that Federal legislation be enacted to prohibit such activities. I agree with the Commission's conclusion and am transmitting this legislative proposal to implement its recommendation.

Various forms of cloning technology have been used for decades resulting in important biomedical and agricultural advances. Genes, cells, tissues, and even whole plants and animals have been cloned to develop new therapies for treating such disorders as cancer, diabetes, and cystic fibrosis. Cloning technology also holds promise for producing replacement skin, cartilage, or bone tissue for burn or accident vic-

tims, and nerve tissue to treat spinal cord injury. Therefore, nothing in the "Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997" restricts activities in other areas of biomedical and agricultural research that involve: (1) the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer or other cloning technologies to clone molecules, DNA, cells, and tissues; or (2) the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer techniques to create animals.

The Commission recommended that such legislation provide for further review of the state of somatic cell nuclear transfer technology and the ethical and social issues attendant to its potential use to create human beings. My legislative proposal would implement this recommendation and assign responsibility for the review, to be completed in the fifth year after passage of the legislation, to the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 9, 1997.

Statement on General Joseph W. Ralston's Withdrawal From Consideration as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

June 9, 1997

I respect General Joe Ralston's decision to remove his name from consideration as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I am pleased that General Ralston has agreed to Secretary Cohen's request to continue in his current post as Vice Chairman. For 32 years, in war and in peace, General Ralston has served our Nation with uncommon distinction. As Vice Chairman, he is a valued adviser to me, and he has played a key role in the Pentagon's review of its post-cold-war mission. The Joint Chiefs and our country will benefit from his continued service. He is an outstanding officer.

I also welcome Secretary Cohen's action to forthrightly and thoroughly review the military's standards and procedures involving personal conduct. It is essential that our system is reasonable, consistent, and fair for those who serve our country and that it is perceived to be so by the American people.

I look forward to receiving Secretary Cohen's recommendation for the Chairmanship of the Joint Chiefs.